

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0054.06 : Tape 6**

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Interviewed by: Dr. Melvyn Goldstein
Name: Lhamo Tsering
Gender: Male
Age: 71
Date of Birth: 1924

Abstract

Lhamo Tsering was the secretary-aide of Gyalo Thondup and was part of the second group of Tibetans trained by the CIA in America in 1958-59. After returning to India, he came to manage much of the CIA's operation in Tibet for Gyalo Thondup. In this interview, he discusses the CIA's debriefing of Athar in Calcutta, and a plan for the Indian government to train he and two other Tibetans in wireless communications so they could be sent to Tibet to send back information. He also mentions the first and second US arms drops.

Tape 6

Q: One of the questions was not that clear. After you and Athar [Tib. a thar] met the American [CIA officer], Frank [Holober], he went back, right? At that time, you people talked and you had to say something to Gombo Tashi. What did you decide to say?

A: After we talked, Athar told Frank, "You have to make a decision and you must help us because Gombo Tashi [Tib. mgon po bkra shis] is a good person and we have soldiers, but we don't have weapons. So it would be helpful if you can help us." Then Frank said, "I can't say for sure that we will help you. But, in case we do help you, do not use weapons like this. And you must hide them. Do not tell anyone that the weapons are from America." So I thought that this was a sign to help us. Otherwise, it was useless to say those things, right? So I thought that they would help, but I didn't tell that to Athar. I just told Athar, "You go back and talk with Gombo Tashi about what he has said, and then we will contact you directly through wireless." We talked for about three to four days, but they [US] didn't decide to help.

Q: Did Athar tell Gombo Tashi that it was not certain whether they would help?

A: He didn't give the answer because it was in India. So we didn't have the chance to give the direct answer and he didn't answer Gombo Tashi in this regard. But, before Athar arrived there, the help was already done.

Q: When he was on his way back, he didn't know that they would help, right?

A: Yes.

Q: If they didn't help, the three of you might have had to tell Gombo Tashi something, right? When he [Athar] went back, he would [have had to] meet Gombo Tashi in Drigutang [Tib. gri gu thang]. What did he think?

A: We just told Athar, "You go ahead and tell Gombo Tashi whatever we have talked about over the four days. But there isn't any talk that they are going to help." We also wrote it down and told him to tell Gombo Tashi as it was written. At that time, I thought they would help, but I didn't tell Athar. However, I didn't know that they would help so fast. While Athar was going, the weapons were dropped and when he arrived there, the weapons were already distributed.

Q: It is also clear that the first drop was not with American-made guns. When he was going back, Lotse [Tib. blo tshe] sent the wireless and the second drop of arms was made. Were these American made weapons? This was not clear.

A: I don't remember clearly, but among the second drop, it was probably not all American-made. As for the complete drop of American guns, like the rifles which hold five to eight bullets, that was made in Jagra Pembar [Tib. lcags ra dpal 'bar]. In the second drop, it was not completely American and I don't know the percentage. And these were distributed to Athar and Lotse's

group.

Q: While you were in India in 1957, Jenkhentsisum talked many times with the Indian government regarding training wireless people and getting the wireless equipment. And it was decided that you and the person called Kachung [Tib. ka chung] and Lobsang [Tib. blo bzang] something would be trained. Tell me a little bit about this.

A: Regarding this, it didn't work out. Therefore, we didn't tell anybody and it was not in my book until now. It was withdrawn just after it was started.

Q: As for the plan and the wireless, were you to go to Lhasa and the other one to go to Kham?

A: That was not yet decided. At first, Gyalo Thondup [Tib. rgya lo don grub], Tsipön Shakabpa [Tib. zhwa sgab pa], and the Khenjung, discussed in India. And they said that "In the future, we need a wireless [communicator] to use and it will be good to learn that." They might have talked like this, but I didn't know that at all. What I was told was to learn it, and I didn't know at all where they were going to send it.

Q: Did you study it?

A: Yes, I studied it a little bit and then I withdrew.

Q: Did you send the wireless to Tibet?

A: No, let alone sending it, the training was not finished and we didn't use it at all. In the time between, I didn't know how the Indian policy had changed and it was stopped.

Q: Who were Kachung and Lobsang? Were they Khambas?

A: Kachung was probably from Lhasa and Lobsang was also probably from Lhasa.

Q: At that time, there were some Indian CIA personal and they had many relations. The Tibetans don't know the Indian names clearly. Since you are an intellectual, you probably know them. One was called something like Bose.

A: Yes, there was one called Bose.

Q: There was one called Gosh?

A: Gosh I don't know.

Q: Is the spelling, Bose?

A: It is spelled D, A, S, Das. It was not his real name.

Q: At one time, the Sikkim political officer was Aba Pant, right?

A: Yes.

Q: After that, did they change?

A: I don't know anyone except Aba Pant.

Q: Who was the Sikkim political officer when you were studying the wireless?

A: He must have been called Kabur, but I don't know clearly unless I look at [my dairy] again. I have never met him.

Q: Was Majumdas your training teacher?

A: No.

Q: Who is Majumdas?

A: I have never heard of that [name].

Q: Das usually lived in Kalimpong or where?

A: Das usually lived in Delhi?

Q: One of them was always in Kalimpong and the [other was] in Sikkim.

A: The teacher was there.

Q: There was one higher up one and he was the one who made the decisions.

A: They didn't introduce us to that person.

A: There was our teacher who was from Bengal. They wouldn't tell us about the person above him.

Q: What was Das' salary scale?

A: I don't know. I have never heard of Bose. I have heard of Das.

Q: What about Gosh?

A: I have never heard [of him].

Q: I heard that Bose was in Kalimpong.

A: Then he might have been in the CIA in Kalimpong. At that time, we were not involved in those things and we were just studying. At that time, Gyalo Thondup, Tsipön Shakabpa, and Khenjung were in charge. We were just told to go to study and at that time, they wouldn't tell us [things] clearly.

Q: At that time, there were two Chinese, a couple, living near the Gangjen [Tib. gangs can] Cinema Hall, a man and a woman. Some say that they were Taiwan GMD's personal and some Khambas made relations with them. Do you remember their names?

A: I don't remember their names.

Q: That's all. Thank you.

A: It has been about 30-40 years and I have a very weak memory. I can only remember the things that I have written in my dairy.